

Capsule Summary

Name of Property: Laurel Colored School
MIHP number: PG:LAU-26
Location: 803 West Street
Laurel, Prince Georges County, Maryland 20707
Date of Construction: 1884
Access: Private

Property Description: The house at 803 West Street is a 1-story, 3-bay residential dwelling on the northern side of West Street in the City of Laurel, Prince Georges County, Maryland. Constructed in 1884, the building has a rectangular floor plan, with two 1-story additions added to its rear and a shed-roof porch on a concrete foundation added to the front elevation. The house appears to be of frame construction and is clad with vinyl siding on all elevations. The foundations of the house and additions are of an unknown material but are covered with concrete. The original building and the first addition have front-gabled roofs while the rear addition has a shed roof, all of which are covered with asphalt shingles. The front porch's roof is of sheet metal and is supported by decorative metal posts. The original building has one interior brick chimney.

Summary Paragraph on History: Although currently a residential dwelling, the building at 803 West Street is significant because it was formerly the Laurel Colored School, or School No. 2, the first and only school in the town of Laurel that catered to the education of Laurel's African-American children after the Civil War. Located in a segregated area of Laurel known as Laurel Grove, or "The Grove," the land on which the school was constructed was conveyed to the Board of County School Commissioners of Prince Georges County in 1884 for the sole purpose of the establishment of a school within the African-American community. Constructed in 1884, the building served as a school for the community's children for almost 40 years before a larger building was provided in 1930. The Laurel Colored School played an important role in assisting the town's African-American families in their transition from slavery to freedom, and, along with St. Marks Church, it became central to Laurel's African-American community.

Inventory No.PG:LAU-26

1. Name of Property

historic Laurel Colored School (Preferred)

other School No. 2

2. Location

street and number 803 West Street _____ not for publication

city, town	Laurel	vicinity
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county	Prince Georges
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3. Owner of Property

name	Jones-Patterson, Dorothy D. et al
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street and number	803 West Street	telephone
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city, town	Laurel	state	Maryland	zip code	20707-3529
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4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.	Tax Department website	liber	7915	folio 156
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city, town	Laurel	tax map	A-0848	tax parcel	tax ID number	10 1060029
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5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☐ Contributing Resource in National Register District
☐ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
☐ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
☐ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
☐ Recorded by HABS/HAER
☐ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
☐ Other:

6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function		Resource Count	
_____ district	_____ public	_____ agriculture	_____ landscape	Contributing	Noncontributing
<u> X </u> building(s)	<u> X </u> private	_____ commerce/trade	_____ recreation/culture	<u> 1 </u>	_____ buildings
_____ structure	_____ both	_____ defense	_____ religion	_____	_____ sites
_____ site		_____ domestic	_____ social	_____	_____ structures
_____ object		<u> X </u> education	_____ transportation	_____	_____ objects
		_____ funerary	_____ work in progress	<u> 1 </u>	_____ Total
		_____ government	_____ unknown		
		_____ health care	_____ vacant/not in use		
		_____ industry	_____ other:		
				Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory	
				0	

7. Description

Inventory No.PG:LAU-26

Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

Summary

The house at 803 West Street is a 1-story, 3-bay residential dwelling on the northern side of West Street in the City of Laurel, Prince Georges County, Maryland. Constructed in 1884, the building has a rectangular floor plan, with two 1-story additions added to its rear and a shed-roof porch on a concrete foundation added to the front elevation. The house appears to be of frame construction and is clad with vinyl siding on all elevations. The foundations of the house and additions are of an unknown material but are covered with concrete. The original building and the first addition have front-gabled roofs while the rear addition has a shed roof, all of which are covered with asphalt shingles. The front porch is a raised concrete pad covered by a sheet metal awning supported by decorative rolled metal scrollwork posts with a metal railing between the posts. The original building has one interior brick chimney located precisely in the center of what was originally the school house's single room.

The lot on which the house stands is flat, with a maintained grass lawn on all sides and low ornamental shrubbery surrounding the house. Residential dwellings are on the western side of the house, while the large lot on the eastern side consists of a cleared, flat, and maintained grass lawn. Neighbors reported that the lot was always cleared, giving evidence to a possible playground located there. A large hardwood tree is at the house's southeastern corner.

Comprehensive Description

The house consists of three sections: a front-gabled main building that was originally the one-room school house; the annex, constructed to increase the capacity of the school; and a smaller addition that possibly was constructed at a later date to house indoor plumbing. The main building's front gable has deep returns. The southern, or front, elevation of the main building has (from west to east): 2 double-hung windows with 2-over-2 lights, 1 double-hung window with 1-over 1-light, and 1 single-leaf door with a 1-light glass and vinyl storm door. Decorative shutters were added to each side of the window on the front elevation. The porch appears to have been added at a later date, possibly when the school house was converted to a private residence. The main building's western and eastern elevations each have 2 double-hung windows with 1 in the front and 1 in the rear of the building, providing even lighting for both sides of the school room. It is possible that a chalkboard might have been located between the two windows on each wall. The centrally placed chimney gives evidence that a fireplace was in the center of the room, serving as the source of heat for the students and teacher.

The annex was formed by an end-gabled addition constructed onto the rear of the main building. The western and eastern elevations each have 1 double-hung window with 1-over-1 light. The eastern elevation has a single-leaf wooden door with divided lights covered by a vinyl and glass storm door. The door may have opened onto a playground adjacent to the school. The second addition has a shed roof, with a slider window on both the western and eastern elevations. The northern, or rear, elevation has no entrance door. The windows on all sections of the house are replacements, with vinyl frames covering original window sashes and sills. There are no outbuildings associated with this building.

Interior access to the property was not available because of the home's vacancy. The owner was deceased, having passed away two days prior to the survey. The house exterior is in good condition and has been well maintained over the years.

8. Significance

Inventory No. PG-LAU-26

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____

Specific dates 1884 – 1930

Architect/Builder Unknown

Construction dates 1884

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register

☐ Maryland Register

☒ not evaluated

Narrative Discussion of History

General History

The house at 803 West Street sits in a neighborhood known as Laurel Grove, or "The Grove." The Grove was named for a grove of oak trees standing in the southwestern portion of what would become the City of Laurel on land that was originally patented to Richard Snowden in 1715 as "Snowden's New Birmingham Manor" in Prince George's County, Maryland. The Laurel area was established by members of the Snowden family, one of the founding families of Maryland, and their relatives from Attleboro, Massachusetts. At the time of the patent, Snowden's estate already was approximately 3,000 acres in size, extending from Old Columbia Pike to the present city of Laurel and from south of Greencastle and Van Dusen Roads to north of Sandy Spring Road. The 1715 patent increased the already substantial Snowden land holdings, and by 1743 the estate had grown to 9,265 acres.

Although the Laurel area was first an agricultural region, it became a location for manufacturing as early as the beginning of the 18th century, distinguishing it from the rest of rural Prince George's County. Manufacturing activity on the Patuxent River started in 1736 when the Snowden family established the Patuxent River Iron Works. Almost a century later in 1811, Nicholas Snowden constructed a stone grist mill building on the banks of the river as well as a dam at what is now Ninth Street in Laurel. In 1824, a Mr. Johnson leased the Snowden mill for a period of 12 years and converted it from a grist mill to a factory for spinning cotton yarn, known as the Cotton Manufacturing Motive of Laurel. The mill was successful and at one time reportedly employed 100 adults. Prior to 1835, another local businessman, Robert Pilsen, installed the first loom in the factory that enabled the weaving of cotton cloth on site.

After Nicholas Snowden's 1831 death, his estate, Montpelier, was subdivided among his family members. His wife received what was called the Bank Quarter, which contained the bank of iron ore. A leftover undivided portion along the Patuxent River, contained approximately 100 acres, the Snowdens' stone mansion, the mill buildings, several log houses, and a well-used farm where successive crops of tobacco and corn had been cultivated. The parcel's location was invaluable because of the exceptional water power provided by the adjacent river.

The location and easy access to the railroad and the turnpike were not lost on Snowden's heirs, which included son-in-law Horace Capron, Louisa's husband and a member of the Capron family of Attleboro, Massachusetts. Snowden had previously worked at a mill at Savage, Maryland, prior to turning his attentions to the lands of the former New Birmingham Manor. On January 28, 1836, Horace Capron joined other Snowden family members in a new business venture. Capron, along with Dr. Theodore Jenkins (brother-in-law of Capron and neighbor of the Snowdens at New Birmingham Manor), Elizabeth Snowden (Capron's mother-in-law), Osmond C. Tiffany (Capron's first cousin from another Attleboro, Massachusetts, family) A.E. Hall, and W.C. Shaw incorporated a new company, the Patuxent Company, for the purpose of manufacturing and selling cotton, iron, and other articles at the site of the mill and farm. The Snowden children's land holdings were combined and transferred when Horace Capron and his wife, Charles Hill and his wife, and Dr. Theodore Jenkins and his wife, conveyed their inherited lands to the Patuxent Company. Deeds for property and stock also were transferred by Osmond Tiffany, Comfort Tiffany, and several Capron cousins, who also were involved in mill activities elsewhere.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. PG:LAU-26

Name
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 1

In 1835, at approximately the same time that the Patuxent Company established its mill operations along the Patuxent River, the Baltimore and Ohio (B&O) Railroad Company completed its rail line, connecting the cities of Baltimore and Washington D.C. The new rail line and depot were just one mile east of the company's mill and enabled the transport of materials and finished products via Main Street to and from the mill. The Washington-Baltimore Turnpike, chartered by the state of Maryland in 1812, also traveled past the town approximately one mile east of the mill.

Shortly after its 1835 incorporation, the Patuxent Company constructed housing for its mill workers near the mill. Merchants established stores and businesses to support the mill employees and their families, and the town, known as Laurel Factory, started to grow. Churches, schools, and social halls were first established in the western end near the mill then east of the mill as the town crept eastward along Main Street toward the turnpike and railroad.

The town grew quickly in the middle of the 19th century as increasingly more businesses, churches, social halls, and schools were established to meet the needs of the fledgling community. The churches included a Protestant Episcopal, a Methodist, and a Catholic Church. A schoolhouse and an assembly hall were built south of the mill building. According to Thomson's Mercantile and Professional Directory, Laurel Factory had its own post office by 1851. By that date, there were four dealers in dry goods, groceries, and hardware; two physicians; one hotelkeeper; and one factory.

History of Resource

Prior to the Civil War, Laurel Factory purportedly was a stop along the Underground Railroad for fugitive slaves escaping to the north. The escape route ran from Sandy Spring, west of Laurel, and through Laurel before turning northward along the Washington and Baltimore Turnpike. Following the Civil War, African-Americans settled in an area in the southwestern part of Laurel that became known as Laurel Grove (later, the Grove). Laurel's African-American population was restricted to living in the Grove, and, as with other similar communities, life and activity there were centered on the church and school.

Prince Georges County's first school for African-American children was at the Muirkirk Iron Furnace. A teacher was sent from the New England Association, a beneficial society based in Boston, Massachusetts, that assisted African Americans in their transition from slavery to freedom following the war. Laurel's children first attended classes in a school set up in a house in the nearby Halltown community off of Route 197, south of Laurel. When grammar schools were officially established, there were three schools in Laurel: School No. 1 was known as the "uptown school," School No. 2 was constructed at 803 West Street and known as the Laurel Colored School, and School No. 3 was known as the "downtown school."

The Laurel Colored School was constructed in the Grove in 1884. The one-room building housed seven grades, with one teacher for all of the grades. As the population in the Grove increased, more space was needed, and an annex was constructed, followed by the leasing of another building by the Board of Education. From 1884 to 1930, when a larger building was built on Eighth Street, all of the Grove's children received their grammar school education from the Laurel Colored School, or School No. 2.

The building that housed the Laurel Colored School was constructed on land that was originally patented to Richard Snowden as "New Birmingham Manor." In approximately 1840, land was conveyed by Eliza Snowden to Dr. Theodore Jenkins, in trust, for Louis M. Jenkins and Frank X. Jenkins for \$20.00 (pages missing from deed book, but see DB JWB 3, P 454). On April 14, 1884, Elizabeth S. Jenkins, Mollie E. Jenkins, and Michael Bannon (trustee of the deceased Dr. Jenkins) sold 1/3 of an acre of the larger tract of land to the Board of County School Commissioners of Prince Georges County for \$50.00 (DB JWB 3, P 454). School No. 2 was constructed the same year and remained publicly-owned until August 7, 1926, when the Board of Education of Prince Georges County sold the building at public auction for \$500.00 to George W. Alcorn, the highest bidder (DB 277, P. 376). On August 5, 1940, G. Bowie McCeney (a trustee for Alcorn's estate) sold the property to Bessy B. and William E. Beall for \$710.00 (DB 576, P. 257). The Bealls sold the property to Otha and Vestine Knox on October 21, 1959 (DB 2388, P. 247) for \$10.00, and on August 29, 1963, the Knoxes sold the same property to Alonzo and Dorothy Jones (DB 2863, P. 317). Dorothy Jones (then a widow) sold the property to Dorothy Jones-Patterson et al, on April 8, 1991 (DB 7915, P. 156). The original house remains on the property and functions as a private dwelling. It is currently vacant.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. PG:LAU-26

Floyd, Bianca Patrice. *Black History and Historic Sites in Prince George's County, Maryland*. Written for Black History Study History Division, Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission, 1983.

Johnson, Sandra. "The African-American Experience in Laurel." Laurel Maryland: Laurel Historical Society, 2003.

Recorder of Deeds, Prince Georges County Circuit Court. Various deeds from Land Records.

Spero, P.A.C. and Company. *Montgomery-Prince Georges Short-term Congestion Relief*. May 1998.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property 0.14 acre
Acreage of historical setting 0.14 acre
Quadrangle name Laurel

Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundary of the surveyed property consists of the tax parcel, Block 8, Lot 13A, and its immediate surroundings.

11. Form Prepared by

name/title	Alison Ross, M.S. Architectural Historian		
organization	KCI Technologies, Inc.	date	10/2008
street & number	5001 Louise Drive	telephone	717-691-1340
city or town	Mechanicsburg	state	PA

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
Maryland Department of Planning
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600



Maryland Historical Trust
 Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties
 Site No. PG: LAU-26

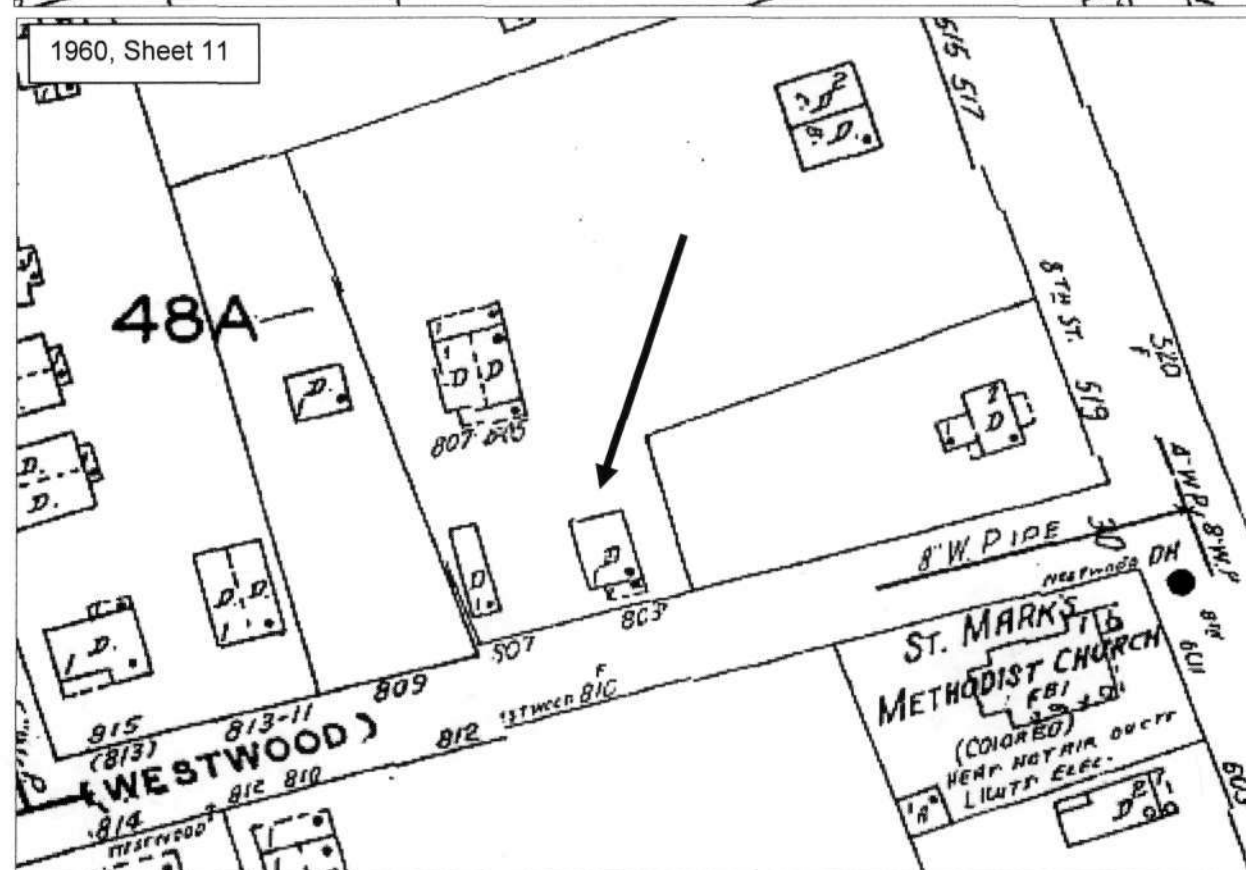
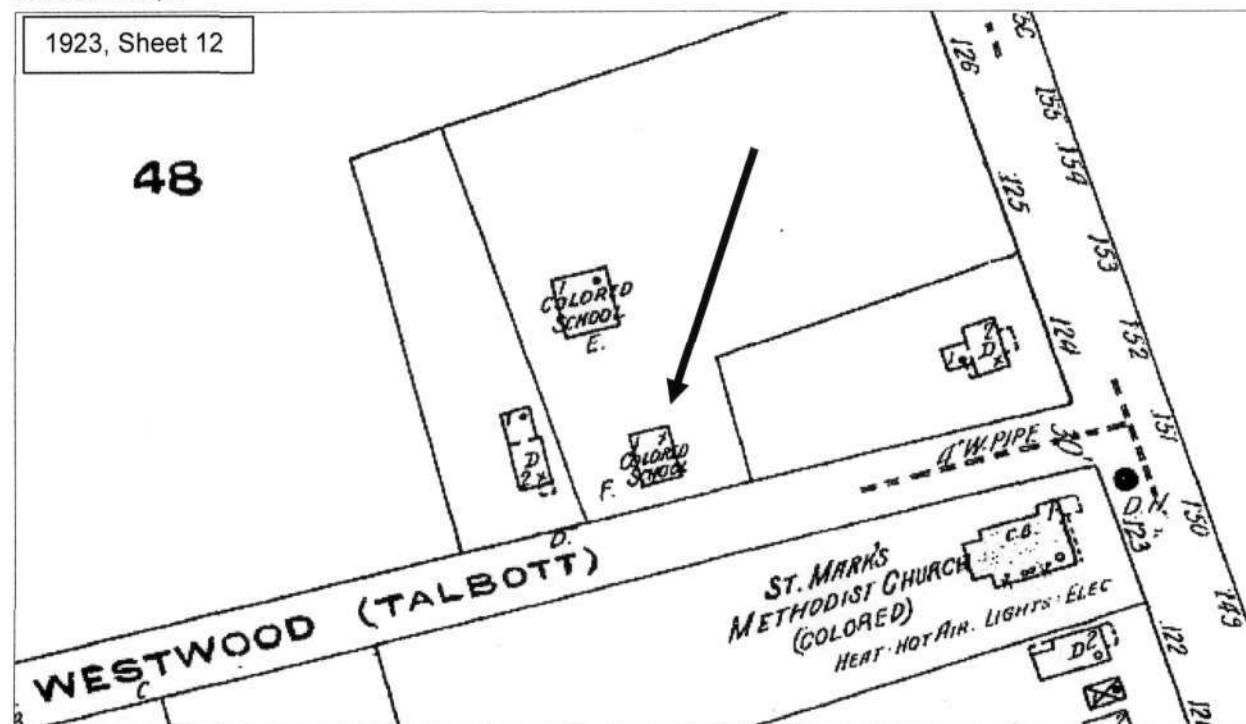
Locational Map

Laurel Colored School
 803 West Street

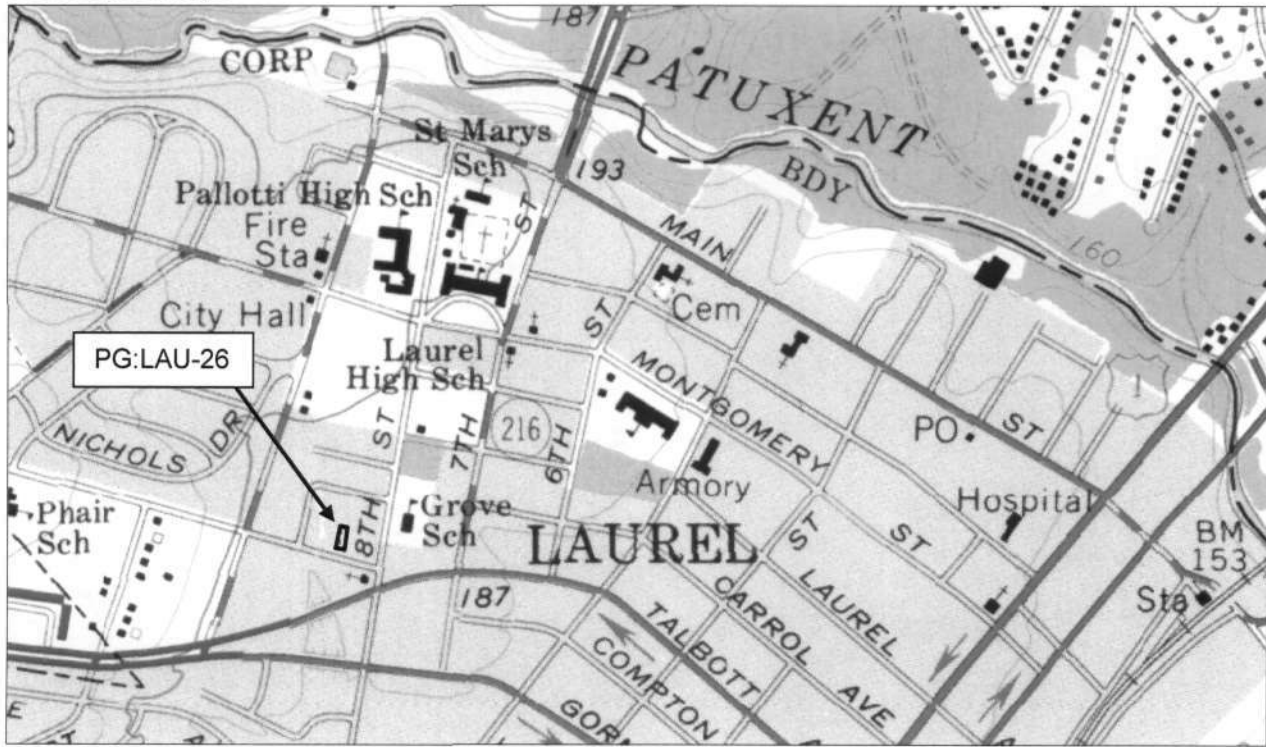
Map Courtesy of
 U.S. Geological Survey
 2004 Microsoft Corporation

Laurel, Maryland, July 1, 1979

PG:LAU-26
Laurel Colored School (School No. 2)
803 West Street, Laurel
Sanborn Maps



PG:LAU-26
Laurel Colored School (School No. 2)
803 West Street, Laurel
Laurel Quadrangle



National Web Map Service 6" Orthophoto Map, c. 2007-08 Tax Map 6, Block 8, Lot 13A
With state parcel boundaries cadastre



MIHP # PG:LAU-26
Laurel Colored School
803 West Street
Laurel, Prince Georges County, Maryland

Photograph Log

Image File Name	Description of View
PG;LAU-26_2008-09-24_01.TIF	View of front elevation, facing north
PG;LAU-26_2008-09-24_02.TIF	View of front and side elevations, facing northwest
PG;LAU-26_2008-09-24_03.TIF	View of side elevation, facing west
PG;LAU-26_2008-09-24_04.TIF	View of rear elevation, facing south
PG;LAU-26_2008-09-24_05.TIF	View of side elevation, facing east
PG;LAU-26_2008-09-24_06.TIF	View of side elevation, facing northeast

Printed on Epson Premium Photo Paper Glossy with Epson UltraChrome Black Ink



MIHP # PG: LAU-86
Laurel Colored School
Prince Georges County, MD
F. Kohler

Sept. 2008

MD SHPO

View of front elevation facing N

Photo 1 of 6



MIHP # PG-LAU-26
Laurel County School
Prince Georges County, MD
F Kohler

Sept 2008

MD SHPO

View of front and side elev. facing NW

Photo 2 of 6



MIHP # PG: LAU-26
Laurel Colored School
Princess Georges County, MD
E. Kohler
Sept. 2008
MD SHPO
View of side elevation facing W
Photo 3 of 6



MIHP #PG:LAU-26
Laurel Colored School
Prince Georges County, MD
F. Kohler

Sept. 2008

MD SHPO

View of rear elevation, facing S

Photo 4 of 6



MIHP # PG: LAU-26
Laurel Cobred School
Prince George County, MD
F. Kohler

Sept. 2008
MD GHPO

view of side elevation, facing E
Photo 5 of 6



MIHP # PG: LAU-26
Laurel School
Prince Georges County, MD

E. Kohler

Sept 2008

MD SHPO

View of side elevation facing NE

Photo 6 of 6



P.G. Laurel #26

PG: LAU-26

PG: LAU-26
P. G. ~~Laurel #2~~

St. Mark's Methodist Church
(Laurel "Colored" School)
Prince George's County, Md.
Susan G. Pearl
April 1983
Southeast 3/4 Elevation
Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, Md.